"Talking Frankly" about David Irving

A Critical Analysis of David Irving's Statement on the Holocaust

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David Irving Increases his Death-Toll for Auschwitz (1:32:38 - 1:35:43)

In 1995, David Irving endorsed a death-toll for Auschwitz of only 100,000 Jews:

> *"If we look just at the case of Auschwitz, I think probably as many as 100,000 Jews died in Auschwitz, which is a brutal slave-labor camp where they had no business to be. The fact that they died in that camp of 'natural causes' – epidemics, mostly typhus – is neither here nor there. Of those 100,000 probably about 10,000 were actually physically murdered in the criminal sense. The rest … fell by the wayside in Auschwitz."* (David Irving, Cincinnati 1995,1:31:50-1:32:22)

The number that Irving gave for the Jewish Auschwitz death-toll in 1995 resembles the estimate, "100,000-150,000" of which "a large number would have been Jews," that Arthur Butz gave in 1989 (A. Butz, *JHR*, fall 1989).

Irving's claim that 10% of the 100,000 Jews were murdered, however, was obviously gratuitous (since any SS-personnel discovered to have murdered even one inmate would have been punished) and, in retrospect, a harbinger of his eventual retreat from Revisionism. David Irving in 2009 has this to say about the death-toll at Auschwitz:

> *"There is a video showing the actual judgment being handed down on them. The judgment was handed down, and in the judgment it says, these people who are guilty today have been the principal officers of a camp, Auschwitz, in which up to 300,000 people of all nationalities met their deaths, came to an end. It doesn't say they were killed; it doesn't say they were gassed. It just says they died – up to 300,000.*
>
> *"Now these, you've got to realize this was the Polish courtroom which had all the Auschwitz documents, and all the Auschwitz prisoners to interrogate, and the figure they used in their judgment as they sentenced these men to death was up to 300,000.*
>
> *"So how, suddenly, did the figure balloon to 4,000,000 on the memorial in Auschwitz in the 1970s and 1980s?*
>
> *"The Communist director – the Jewish director – of the Auschwitz State Museum, Franciszek Piper, he eventually had that figure chiseled down, and a new monument erected to the 1.2 million killed.*
>
> *"You notice, it's rather like Monopoly money, the way they play around with these figures.* (1:34:35 – 1:35:43)

Irving here opines about death-tolls claimed for Auschwitz with what seems to be inadequate knowledge of the history of such claims. He implies that there has been wild variation, but the Communist line about how many died in Auschwitz, although universally acknowledged as false today, was quite consistent during the period of Communist rule.

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as autocratically dictated "truth" ought to be.

The figure of "more than 4,000,000" killed in Auschwitz (which was supposed to include systematically genocided Poles as well as Jews) was promulgated as the official position of the Soviet government on 7 May 1945, and was uncritically repeated by Western news-media (AP, 7 May 1945). The same number was then used by the Communist government of Poland in prosecuting the former commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolf Hoess, at Krakow in March 1947 (AP, 11 March 1947, AP, 16 April 1947).

In the *second* Auschwitz-trial staged in Krakow, in November and December 1947, 40 other Germans were prosecuted. It is to this trial that David Irving refers. According to the Associated Press, the death-toll alleged at this trial was the same as in the previous Auschwitz-trial, and consistent with the 1945 decree of the Soviet government:

> *"The prosecution had estimated that 4,500,000 people died from starvation, torturing, hanging and in the gas chambers at Auschwitz...."* (*AP*, 22 December 1947)

If the report of the Associated Press on the second Auschwitz-trial was correct, then the Communist line of (at least) 4 million dead for Auschwitz was consistently maintained until after the collapse of the Polish People's Republic in 1989, whereafter the figure was reduced to a less outrageously untenable figure (AP, 18 July 1990).

David Irving seems to assume that facts – "all the Auschwitz documents, and all the Auschwitz prisoners to interrogate" – were relevant in the Krakow trials. But Communist show-trials are not about justice; they are about political propaganda. In such trials the prosecutors and judges are on the same team, the defendant is presumed guilty, and a verdict that substantially contradicts the indictment is simply not possible. It means that the report that this trial made a finding of only 300,000 deaths at Auschwitz – substantially contradicting the Soviet line – cannot be correct.

The video to which David Irving refers does exist. It is a *Welt im Film* newsreel of 8 January 1948. *Welt im Film* was a propaganda-arm of the British and American occupation-authorities; as a tool of "re-education" it cannot be considered a highly trustworthy source. Why would *Welt im Film* have misreported the second Auschwitz-trial's finding? Perhaps because a report of 4.5 million dead in one camp would have sparked incredulity in the German viewers.

Irving has always boasted of his reliance on primary sources, searching for original documents and interviewing eyewitnesses. But in this instance, relying on a newsreel issued by British and American occupation-authorities instead of a document from the trial, he failed to live up to his own espoused principle.

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